

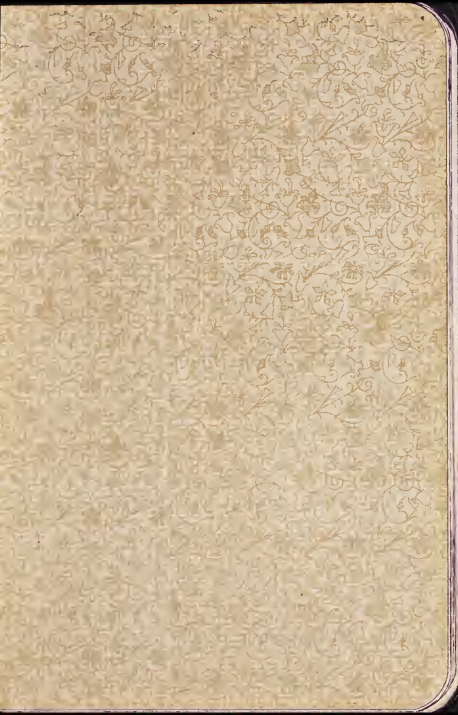
ACROSS THE PLAINS IN '49

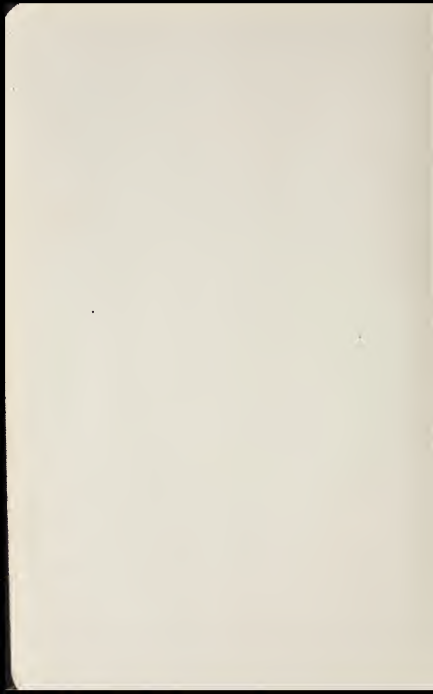
BY E. GOUGHNOUR

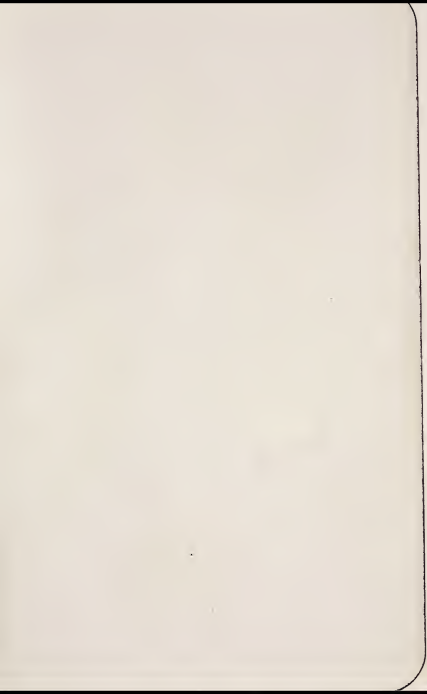
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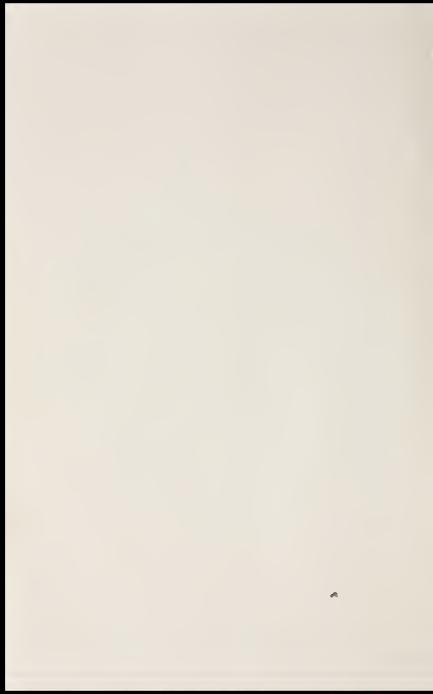














ACROSS THE PLAINS

IN "49"

BY E. GOUGHNOUR.

## PREFACE.

The following pages are written for and dedicated to my children and their descendants. It is a truthful account of just what happened on the journey, without sensational features, only so far as the actual facts would indicate.







E. GOUGHNOUR.

# CROSSING THE PLAINS.

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## CHAPTER I.

On the sixteenth day of April, 1849, in company with four other men, including my father, I started from the village of Libertyville, Iowa for the land of GOLD in California, over that long and tedious route of nearly two thousand miles, inhabited almost entirely by Indians; and many of those tribes of a very hostile nature. Our outfit consisted of four yoke of oxen, one wagon and two cows that were taken along with the intention of using their milk; but soon after our journey had fairly begun, the milk proved to be worthless, so we placed a yoke upon them, and thus driven they soon became so tractable that we put them in the lead, and they made the best leaders in the lot; and in that position we drove them the entire distance. The day we started was cold

enough to chill the heart of the older ones, saying nothing of "our boy," as they called me. We made fifteen miles the first day, to a place called Agency City, about five miles east of the present city of Ottumwa, which was then but a small village. Our progress through the State of Iowa was very slow, as all of the streams were at flood tide, with no bridges or ferries; these difficulties were of a very serious nature but we overcame them as best we could, generally by making rafts of logs found along the streams, on which our supplies of provisions and traps were ferried across. In all such cases our cattle were driven in and made to swim the rivers. After a tedious trip of over a month we arrived at Cainsville, now called Council Bluffs. Ten miles a little north of west from this point we crossed the "Big Muddy," known on the map as the "Missouri River," to winter quarters, a station the Mormons had established for the use of those of their people, who followed them to the promised land, to-wit: Salt Lake City. Here they had a ferry for the accommodation of their people, which was during the exodus from Nauvoo, Illinois, and began in 1846. They also crossed others upon being paid a good price for doing so. This being the point where all civilization was left behind, we found quite a number of

men and teams awaiting enough of a crowd to proceed in safety, as all the remainder of our journey would be through a hostile Indian country.

## CHAPTER II.

After a day or two, about twenty teams with their complement of men had gathered there; then an organization was effected, a captain with a full complement of other officers was elected, and all were expected to obey their orders. All being in readiness the caravan was ordered to proceed, all of those not engaged in driving the teams were ordered to "shoulder arms" and proceed in military style in advance of the teams. This arrangement was of short duration, and soon much dissatisfaction was apparent, mainly because of the slow progress that was being made. But here we were where we did not know but that we might be attacked at any time by the Indians, so it seemed like a rather hazardous move to cut loose from the main body and go alone, with a less number of teams. Thus things went on for about ten days when another difficulty arose; this was because some of the crowd (including ours) were entirely opposed to driving seven days in

the week instead of six. But no amount of persuasion would get any considerable portion of the company to change the program. So one Sunday morning after every effort had failed, our team and one other failed to comply with the order of forward march. Many protests from the Captain and others failed to change our determination to try it alone. We rested the entire day on that Sunday, and on Monday morning we started, our teams appearing to move along faster than at any time since we started from the Missouri River. Now, mark what I say about the progress, proving beyond a doubt that either man or beast can accomplish more in six days than in seven, where the service is continuous, for in less than two weeks we passed all the other teams with which we had started from the Missouri River, nor did any of them pass us again after that. We made the entire trip with all of our stock, except two that were killed by the Indians, and of which I will speak later on; and when we arrived at our journey's end, they were almost fit for beef, whereas the others lost most of their stock, and were much longer on the road than we were. Our route from the Missouri River was up the North Platte River to its confluence with the Sweetwater, and up that stream to the south pass of the Rocky Mount-



ains. It should be said here that Omaha was not in existence at that time, nor for several years later. There are not many streams entering the Platte from the north side to materially impede our progress; the main ones are the Elkhorn and Loop Fork. At that time of the year, the latter part of May, all of them were low enough to ford; but the Loop River is a treacherous stream to cross, because of its quicksand bottom. When quicksand is encountered in a stream of water, if by any means a team should get stuck, it will at once begin to sink, and if not rescued at once will soon disappear. We, however, succeeded in getting over safely; but others there at the same time had some narrow escapes. The trip up this River in the main was a rather monotonous one, but would have been much more so but for the game of all kinds, such as buffalo, elk, deer, antelope, wolves, coyotes, jack rabbits and prairie dogs. Among all the others the buffalo was the surprise to all who had never seen them in the wild state, especially was this the case because of their great numbers. I think at this writing, in the year 1908, it would be difficult to convey to the mind of anyone the great number on those plains at that time, especially when in a comparatively short length of time they became an extinct specie, where

then they roamed in countless millions. Looking across the Platte River to the south over the rolling hills, just as far as the eye could reach, countless thousands of them could be seen grazing quietly. On one occasion when so many of them were in sight, a band of Indians rode upon them, creating such a stir that at a distance the sound of the stampede was much like distant thunder, for when once started in a certain direction nothing will stop them from going in that direction. On one occasion they were stampeded by the Indians on the opposite side of the river from where our road ran. For a time we thought they would certainly not attempt to cross the river but our minds were soon disabused of this thought, for soon after thousands of them plunged pell-mell into the river and headed straight for us. Then I can assure you that we got a move on that ox team. Fortunately, just beyond where we were at the time there was an abrupt turn in the road around a rocky cliff, and turning our team as quickly as possible we got them behind that protection, and we had scarcely gotten the team in that position when in the rear of us thousands of them rushed madly over the road, and so on their northward course in the direction they had started. Only a few scattering ones crossed the road ahead of us; it took all

hands and the cook to keep our teams from breaking away from us during the stampede of those buffalo. The Platte River at this point is a wide stream, generally shallow and full of small islands. There is no timber growing on this stream until the foothills are reached, so our fuel for cooking purposes was mainly sage brush and buffalo chips, with some drift wood occasionally found along the river. During the time we were passing through the buffalo country we had plenty of fresh meat, sometimes a deer or antelope, but mainly buffalo, as it was our habit when we were taking a rest, to kill a nice fat heifer at least once a week. We used all that was required for immediate use, cooked in the usual way, and the rest of the fleshy part was cut into strips about one inch square and as long as possible; and this was hung inside of the wagon on the bows, and there (in the dry climate) would soon make good "jerked" beef, which could be carried for a long distance without spoiling. This we did more especially when we neared the end of the buffalo range, which was at the foot of the mountains. We saw but few Indians on our way, although we knew the country was full of them on every side. Those we did see were of a friendly disposition. Occasionally some of them would come into camp to trade

skins nicely dressed for a little powder and lead. Many a nice buckskin I secured for a little ammunition. In this connection it should be remembered that no fixed ammunition was in use at that time, but only powder and lead from which we moulded our own bullets for our muzzle-loading rifles—the only kind in use those days. At a point north of where Sidney, Neb., is now located we came in sight of Pike's Peak, around which now is located the world renowned rich gold mines of Colorado. We finally reached the first crossing of the Platte River, opposite Fort Laramie. This River just at the foot of the mountains is a very rapid stream, and we found a ferry operated by the United States soldiers stationed there at that point. Swimming our cattle, as usual, we found this river extremely difficult to ford on account of the swift current, and came near losing one of our men who tried to swim that cold river. Fort Laramie was occupied by a company of United States soldiers and many "squaw men" and their families living in the vicinity.

### CHAPTER III.

After leaving Ft. Laramie our road was over a succession of hills and hollows, until we again reached the Platte River, where we found

a narrow valley covered with timber. It was at this point where I had an experience never to be forgotten. It was my custom to drive the team most of the time, but when I asked for a day off to do my share of hunting, it was always readily granted. So early on that particular morning I shouldered my rifle and started off to the southward. At that point there was a long ridge running parallel with the river and wagon road, distant from one to five miles, but in plain sight of the river. After reaching the said divide I saw south of me a fine valley literally covered with elk, deer, antelope and other game, so I wandered down there, occasionally taking a shot at some of the game. Finally, I retraced my steps and again followed the ridge which still continued nearly parallel with the river, but gradually getting farther away. About one o'clock I concluded to turn toward the road, but by this time I was quite tired and to rest awhile I sat down, and directly laid down resting my head on a grassy tussock; and as might have been expected, I went to sleep. When I awoke the last rays of the sun were just disappearing over the mountain to the west, and I then realized the foolish thing I had done. My reader can imagine that I lost no time in descending that mountainside towards the

road, about five miles distant. At the foot of the mountain where I gained the valley it was thickly timbered and much undergrowth, but I finally got to the road, which was then sometime after dark. I found upon inquiry of the campers along the road that my teams were still farther on ahead. I made all possible haste and finally found my crowd at the second crossing of the Platte, at 12 o'clock that night. A worse scared set of men on my account would be hard to find; and as a matter of course, I got a good scolding which I told them was hardly necessary, as I fully realized my foolish boy-like trip. Be it remembered that this was in a hostile Indian country, and if any of the roving tribes had gotten sight of me during the day it would have been the last of one gold seeker. In my later years I more fully realize the danger I subjected myself to on that occasion.

At this point we again crossed the Platte River to the north side. Here, as on all of these mountain streams, we found it quite difficult to cross on account of the swift current, and almost ice cold water; but at this point we found plenty of timber to construct our raft, and by sundown we were safely over.

Our route was now again up the Platte to the Sweetwater River, crossing this stream just

a little way from Independence Rock. This was quite a noted and rather peculiar place, the rock apparently being of hard granite with an almost perpendicular face on three sides, on which was written, painted and chiseled hundreds of names of those who had passed, giving it much the appearance of a mining town with signs on all sides. From this place we followed a gradual slope to the south pass of the Rocky Mountains, but having little resemblance to a pass, as generally understood. Both north and south was a gradual grassy slope to the higher range on either side; and here we began the descent towards the Pacific Ocean, though passing many high ranges of mountains after this. We now followed a rather level plateau until we struck the broken country of the Green River. Arriving at this River we again found one of the most difficult streams to cross on our entire trip. Repeating the process of making rafts, heretofore described, after three days of hard work we got safely across. From there we took what was known as the "Bear River Route," from Green River to Bear River, and had a high range of mountains to cross between these two rivers, which was in many respects the most difficult we had yet encountered. In descending this mountain about half a mile of it was so steep that we had to let our

wagons down by using ropes fastened to the rear axle of the wagons, and utilizing small trees at the side for snubbing posts. Upon reaching the Bear River we found one of the most beautiful valleys to be seen in any country. Here we found a large Indian village, estimated to contain at least two thousand Indians, but they seemed to be very friendly, and came around with their dressed skins of all kinds to trade for lead and powder; but it was something to conjure over on our part when we turned in for the night, surrounded by these Indians. But we were not molested in any way and the next morning our men traded with them quite extensively. I myself laid in a goodly supply of fine buckskins, enough in fact, to last me all the years I remained in the mines, to make gold purses. Following the Bear River for some distance, passing Soda Spring, we left this stream and took what was called a cut off to Ft. Hall, on the Snake River, leaving Salt Lake some distance to the south. At Ft. Hall we found some United States soldiers.

#### CHAPTER IV.

From here we followed down the Snake River some distance by the way of what is now



known as American Falls. Soon after passing those Falls we left the Snake River, turning south over a succession of hills, and through what was called Thousand Spring Valley, where we found fine cool springs, issuing from some subterranean source, and within a rod of these cold springs others that were so hot that we could boil pork by actual test in fifteen minutes. After leaving this valley we again passed over a long range to the head of the Humboldt river, at Wells, where the Southern Pacific Railway now has a station called by that name. Those wells are quite deep, or at least, we had no lines with sinker attached that was long enough to reach bottom. They are about two or two and a half feet in diameter, perfectly round and appear to be as smooth as if made of cement surface on the inside. The water is clear, pure and cold and good drinking water. They contained a small specie of fish, about the size of a common sardine; and they certainly were one of nature's wonders.

We followed down this stream to its sink, a distance of about two hundred miles. This is not strictly speaking a mountain stream, and along its banks are many alkali springs, the water being so strongly impregnated with this poisonous water that stock of any kind that drinks it will sicken and die. But fortunately,

here, as at many other places where this poisonous water was known to exist, those who were ahead had posted notices to those following warning them of the danger to stock; and by this means the life of much stock was saved. But notwithstanding this precaution many thousands of head were lost on this River. At the mouth, or rather the sink, of this stream there is nothing to show why it should disappear, only that there was a broad marshy place grown over with what might be called tule; but as is well known to persons familiar with this part of the country, all the streams in the Basin disappear the same way. There are quite a number of them including the Bear, the Truckee and Carson and many others, which disappear without any visible outlet. It would seem that most of the water of those rivers is lost by evaporation; but still it is the opinion of many that they have some kind of a subterranean outlet. After leaving the sink of the Humboldt, we cross a sandy desert, for a distance of fifty-two miles, without any vegetation of any kind, not even sage brush on the sun-scorched land. Here we had to carry water for the stock, or sufficient to keep them alive, and also for ourselves. The trip is made in two nights, as the days are too hot to undertake the trip in day time. On this desert there

is plenty of water not to exceed six or eight feet from the surface, as I myself demonstrated while resting at midday, and found the water in abundance at a depth of not more than six feet; but the water was as salt as the sea itself. Arriving at Carson River we found a beautiful stream of water with an abundance of good grass on all sides, and the banks with a nice growth of alder and other small timber, making a most agreeable change from what we had just passed over. Here we found another rather strange thing on our journey, not by nature's work, but made by man. It was a corral that some of those ahead of us had constructed, and which was made entirely of wagon wheels and log chains, that had been abandoned by those who had lost their stock on the way. The corral embraced at least half an acre in extent. It is well to say here that long before this point was reached hundreds, yes even thousands, of pounds of provisions and other supplies had to be abandoned and left by the roadside by those who had lost their teams. In some cases tents full of all kinds of supplies were left, not only eatables, but ammunition, as well as powder by the keg full; and in some of these places the "boy" of the crowd had lots of fun in trailing some of this powder for about twenty yards, setting fire to it and

watching it run to the keg and explode; not being confined, of course, it only produced a big flash. Another way we had of disposing of some of the property thus left was to turn down a wagon wheel and make a fire under the hub, thus making a fine place on which to cook a meal. Hundreds of such vehicles were left behind when teams died or gave out. In many instances where only a part of their teams were left they would make carts of parts of wagons and then move on again; many and many a one got left entirely even with this kind of a rig, and to complete the journey would take their blankets on their backs with what little grub they could pack, just as many of the tramps of today do, with this difference that there were no kitchens to fall back on. After a day's rest at this point on the Carson River we resumed our journey and the second day thereafter we encountered our first serious difficulty with the Indians. At noon of that day we turned our cattle out, taking off the yokes as usual. Two of the men and myself drove them down to the river, about two hundred yards distant, to allow them to drink and graze, there being a nice grove of alder and fine grass. And after attending to the cattle I concluded to take a swim before returning to camp. After our dinner was over and our

usual rest of an hour or more, I accompanied some of the men to round up the cattle; and to our horror when we got to where they were, we found two of the best oxen we had shot full of poison arrows and in the last agonies of death. The balance of them we drove to camp, but the man to whom the two injured oxen belonged was in a rage of madness over his loss and insisted on all of the men shouldering their guns and hunting down those red skins; but the foolishness of such a move was soon made apparent to him, and we got away from there with all possible speed. Not an Indian had been seen for a distance of nearly five hundred miles, but we knew full well that for all this distance we were in a hostile Indian country. When Indians in those days came into camp to trade we felt safe; but when we could not see any of them we were always more cautious in guarding our stock at night with as much vigilance as picket guards in the army. In a few days we arrived at the foot of the Sierra Nevada mountains where all danger from Indians was over.

At this point we found a man who was selling beef to the emigrants, having driven his cattle over the mountain from the Sacramento valley. But it was sold at an enormously high price and while we were resting before resum-

ing our journey over that rugged mountain, an incident occurred that is worth mentioning, for the reason that it demonstrated just how mean a man can be when he thinks he has the opportunity: While we were thus resting another team drove up with its usual complement of men; and soon after a man with his blankets on his back came along, one of those already described who had lost all his stock. He went up to the butcher and handed him one dollar and said: this and my blankets and a few crackers, is all that I have in the world, and I wish to get enough to eat to take me into the mines. The butcher took his dollar, taking up his knife cut off a small piece, not more than three or four pounds, and handed it to the man who took it and sat down on his blankets, looking the very picture of despair. During all of this time the rest of us were looking on and contemplating in our minds how mean a man could be under such circumstances.

Just then one of the men who had last driven up went up to the butcher and asked him for the loan of his knife for a moment; but instead of using it for some other purpose, pushed the butcher aside, took the knife and cut off a fine chunk of the nicest part of the beet and handed it to the man still

sitting on his blankets, saying perhaps with this and something the others of us will contribute will last you over the mountain. In the meantime the butcher stood there looking daggers but he knew from the looks of that crowd that he had better keep perfectly quiet. Many and many a time have I thought of that incident when seeing like actions in others. The following day we started to make our last and most difficult drive over that mountain of perpetual snow. While ascending this mountain I was taken very sick with fever, and after the top was reached and we had driven a day's journey down the west side they came to a stop. After being there two days I asked one of the men why they were not moving on; and he told me very kindly that they thought I was too sick to stand the jolting of the wagon. I said to him for God's sake to drive on, as I can never get well until we reach our journey's end. Accordingly they started again and in about three days we arrived at Hangtown in the midst of the great placer gold mining country. Our men drove three miles farther to a place called Cold Springs, midway between Hangtown and Coloma, where gold was first discovered the year before our arrival there. Here the final break-up of our little band took place after that long

and tedious journey of just four months and six days. In a day or two after, our teams and other effects belonging to us, were sold and the money realized divided. A tent was set up and my bed placed in it, as I was still very sick. Then all departed except my father who remained for a time longer, until I became much better, and then he, too, departed. Thus ended that long and trying journey. But I cannot close this part of my narrative without a word more about the men with whom I came, and I very much doubt if five men were ever thrown together who made that trip more agreeably than did our little company; and to me, as young as I was, every consideration was shown, both in sickness and in health. All of them have long since gone to that "Bourne from whence no traveler ever returns," and my prayer is that their souls may be resting in peace. In concluding this short story of my trip, it may not be amiss to add to the present young generation by saying that few can at this day realize what a journey over those plains at that time meant. In my short and imperfect history of that journey hundreds of minor incidents were passed over, the recital of which would make a good sized book of itself; but as stated in the preface, it is only to give my children (and all those who



may by chance or otherwise see this narrative,) a plain, unvarnished account of what took place on that trip, without embellishment or any attempt at sensationalism, as has been done by others who have taken the journey since that time.

## THE END OF THE PLAINS TRIP.





# PERSONAL EXPERIENCE

## IN THE

### MINES OF CALIFORNIA

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#### CHAPTER I.

In the following pages I will give some of the experiences I had during my stay in the land of gold, and will state that I doubt if there are many men who have met with so many strange and unusual incidents in the short period of five and a half years.

Going back to Cold Springs where our journey ended, I was still quite sick from the fever I had contracted while crossing the mountains. After about ten days I began to get much better, but still quite weak. I was very anxious to return to Hangtown in the midst of that gold camp, where hundreds of miners were washing out the precious metal. So early one morning about two weeks after our arrival

there, I packed my blankets with the few other effects I possessed and started for Hangtown, the distance being three miles, and reached there just at sun down. From this it can be readily seen that I was still very weak from my illness, and when I reached this place my trouble had only began, so I went into a store kept in a large log house, the only one of the kind in that town at that time—all the other business of every kind being done in tents. I said to the proprietor that I was sick and very tired, and would he allow me to lie down in some part of the building for the night. He told me very kindly that he could not allow me to do so, as his business which included a saloon was kept open all night; but said he there is a work bench just outside over which there was a shed, and that I could occupy that if I cared to do so. With me it was anywhere that I could lie down and rest. So I wrapped my blankets around me and laid down on the work bench, thus spending my first night in that mining town. The next morning I secured permission to occupy a cabin belonging to some miners while they went on a prospecting tour. My bunk consisted of some spilt slats, slats for the bottom and pine boughs for a mattress. I began to feel better in a few days and hoped that my trouble of sickness

was about over, but in this I was woefully disappointed, for I took an ailment peculiar to camp life after such a long journey and the necessary diet limited to those things which we could carry, which kept me to my bed for three long weary months, which seemed to me almost too much to endure; but here I was in the country I had traveled so far to see, and buoyed up by this thought and the one that my ill luck would at some time come to an end, I strived to keep a stiff upper lip. I was attended only by the daily call of some kind hearted miners, who dropped in to ask of my condition. From lying on this hard bed so long my hips were almost worn through the flesh, but in course of time I began to improve, and by the first of December became sufficiently recovered to do a little work.

"Hope smiles through gloom."

"So for us, one by one, the Bell of Death  
in the tower of Destiny

Must toll to call us from the busy scenes  
of life;

But why should we repine when through a  
thousand avenues

The light of life and love are streaming  
sweet divine,

Unfailing love walks the pilgrim paths

with man, the witness  
For immortality on the shore of Time.  
She walks with each from the wail of the  
    cradle to the  
Sigh of the tomb, and even keeps her vigil  
    over the slumbering dust;  
Every day we live, leaves one day less to  
    do the good we ought to do,  
In this hour of tender thoughts and sacred  
    memories,  
Hope comes smiling through the gloom,  
    with faith radiant with promise.  
She bids us exchange our tears for smiles.  
In place of crape, to wear the forget-me-  
    not  
In place of weeping willow and sombre  
    cypress,  
To plant the rose tree and scatter flowers  
    over the graves  
Of our beloved dead. Comrade rest in  
    peace."

After this I began to feel quite strong, and the first work I did was to assist another man to whipsaw some lumber, out of which I made me a "rocker," the only kind of machine then known to the miner to extract the gold from the gravel. Soon after came the long tom, then the sluice box, to be followed by

the hydraulic system. In this connection it is well to say that since that date in 1849, all the great advancement in the mining world has taken place, not only in placer mining but in every other kind that has added so much wealth to the entire world.

Before entering on a detailed statement of my experience in mining, I wish to state that one of the most fortunate things that could befall a young man seeking knowledge was my becoming acquainted with some men who had a cabin near mine, and who invited me to spend my evenings with them. They were intelligent gentlemen, every one of them, one being a professor from a college in Indiana, one a professor of astronomy; another a young graduate from a college in Illinois; another a miller by trade, J. C. Burgoyne by name; and last but not least an old German without any known relatives in the United States or elsewhere, so far as I know. It was he that in later years proved to be to me all that a father could to a son. Of the two latter persons I will have more to say in this narrative. They had quite a supply of books, all of the latest in science and other branches of learning, all of which I much enjoyed in my eagerness to learn. Not only this, but one and all seemed to be anxious to assist me as in-

structors; and I hardly need to state that the lessons there learned have never been forgotten.

About the first of January, 1850, I located my first claim on a small flat immediately above the city of Hangtown. It may be well to explain here that at that time a claim consisted of sixteen feet square,—no more. I then went to work and kept at it until about the first of May; and at that time did not have more than one half of the claim worked out, the process being very slow because of the tough clay the ground consisted of. From this it can be seen how slow the process of mining was with the crude methods used in those days; also to show the richness of the ground, after I had mined thus long, the result of those four months' work, my net earnings were about \$1600.00. And that, too, after the high prices were paid for grub and all other necessities, for example: flour was one dollar per pound; butter (better to be called grease) was two dollars and fifty cents per pound; lard the same; potatoes one dollar per pound; what was supposed to be a quart of pickles sold for eight dollars; a round point shovel with long handles, four ounces, sixty-four dollars; and all other supplies needed in mining or eating were at proportionately high



prices. Gold at that time was rated at Sixteen dollars per ounce in general trade, but at the same time was really worth from eighteen to twenty dollars, which was paid after the first assay office was established at San Francisco. But in the mines and among the merchants sixteen dollars prevailed for three or four years. From the above statement it can be easily seen how rich those mines were, but like all others, I was not satisfied with my winter's work and started off to hunt diggings that would pay. But as usual in such cases, it did not pan out as expected. So after spending the summer prospecting, and most of my money too, I returned to a place called Kelseys Dry Diggings, about seven miles north of Hangtown, and five miles east of Coloma. Here I spent the winter and part of the spring of 1851. In company with a young man with whom I had some acquaintance, I engaged in the mercantile business, such as groceries and miners' supplies. For a time we prospered very far beyond our expectations, and had a fortune in sight, provided my partner had been honest, as I fully expected he was when I engaged in business with him. We had bought a fine freight outfit of four large mules, wagon etc., which made a great saving on our expenses. My partner did the teaming and I at-

tended to the store, he always taking the money on hand to pay for the goods at Sacramento. We prospered exceedingly for about three months, at which time after starting for a load of goods, my partner disappeared with the team, money and all. And after a long and diligent search we failed to locate him. So he had nearly all of our means and I had the experience. I closed out what was left and resumed my regular occupation of mining. About two weeks after that time at twelve o'clock at night, there came two or three raps on my cabin door. I jumped up at the same time grabbing my rifle and demanded to know who was there. My scare was soon over when I recognized the voice of a young man with whom I had been working some time before. I let him in and requested to know what brought him there at that time of the night. He said I am very tired, give me a bite to eat and I will tell you. I did so and then he unfolded a story that was the greatest surprise to me of anything I had heard even in that country of surprises. It was concerning a young man from my State, and one with whom I had gone to school. He told me in as short order as possible that the fellow had been suspected of stealing some gold dust from a miner in his camp, and his guilt fully

established by finding the gold in his possession. In the meantime he had been taken quite sick and was then confined to his bed, but was convalescing. For this crime the penalty in those days was hanging,—none but miner's laws prevailed at that time. His case had been tried and the decision was that as soon as he was sufficiently recovered he was to be hanged, hence, the mission of my caller. He said to me that you are the only one that can save his neck; will you try to do it? I, as a matter of course, assented, after he had told me all he knew. He said that he must immediately return to his camp, which was twenty miles distant. So he departed leaving the rest to me. I knew the locality well as I worked near there the fall before, and I was determined to do all that I could to assist him, without laying myself liable, for this at that time was a very hazardous undertaking. Early the next morning I started for the place and arrived there at about three o'clock p. m., had my dinner and then began to reconnoiter. I soon located the shack where the man was stopping, on the roadside on a little bench. Immediately above his cabin was a dense growth of chapparal, to a side stream that entered into the main river about three hundred yards below his cabin. This stream had no

miners at work, but was very rapid and dangerous to cross; but I found a foot log where a tree had fallen across. I provided two poles to use in easing across. I then returned to the main stream, got my supper, and just after dark when all the miners were busy getting their evening meal, I ventured up to his cabin, where the man I sought was living, still in bed. It can be better imagined than told of his surprise at seeing me, for this was the first he knew of an attempt to rescue him. A guard was continually kept over the cabin, both day and night, and knowing the habits of miners as well as I did, I knew that the only chance was to spirit him away just at that time. I explained to him that no time could be lost, and asked him if he could walk. He answered "yes, he could walk for a short distance." In as few words as possible I told him what to do and where to meet me. I then left him, unobserved, and returned to the place appointed for our meeting. I had been there but a few moments when I heard a crackling in the brush and a moment later he came out. It was twilight and we could dimly see the foot-log. I gave him one of the poles I had provided, took his blankets and told him to proceed. We both crossed safely; from that point the underbrush was fully as dense as

that we had just come through. For nearly two miles to the top of the mountain we made our way as best we could, up the mountain-side for about a quarter of a mile. He then said he could not go any farther that night, in fact, he had stood it better than I had expected. So I made a kind of a bed of leaves and other rubbish and left him, after handing him a good sized bulldog of the Colts variety; and gave him full instructions as to how he should proceed from there; and especially not to try to move in daylight. I then made my way to the top of the mountain to the traveled road, getting back to my home at noon the following day.

I did not hear from the fellow for one year after that, and then only by mere chance, from a man who knew where he was at work; but I did hear from that mining camp from my friend who was my informant, of the difficulty after they learned the next day that the bird had flown. Every avenue of escape, except the right one, was carefully searched, but without avail. But as usual in such cases, where there is so much changing of location, all was soon forgotten. Further on in this narrative I will have more to say of the man I rescued.

## CHAPTER II.

The rest of the summer of this year I spent in Kelsey and surrounding camps. I then moved to a new mining camp about thirty miles from this place, and then heard of another place that was said to be very rich, only a mile and a half farther on. To that place I went; it was then called "Adams Gulch." Here I was joined by another man and soon after we bought several mining claims, including a ditch about six miles long, that conveyed the water to our claims just purchased. Here we built our winter quarters, and called the place Eldorado Hill, by which name it is still known. Everything now being in readiness for mining, we hired several men to assist us; but after working these claims for several months we found that they would not pay expenses, aside from any profit being realized therefrom. After having paid several thousand dollars for the property, besides what we had paid for help, we figured that even if the mines did not pay we had a good thing in the ditch and the water right (if the title was good;) and we at that time had every reason to believe that it was, as water rights are always valuable pro-

perty in a mining country, and water was in great demand. So we began to make arrangements to extend our ditch to that place only a mile and a half distant, and not difficult to build. One day while we were at dinner a rap came on the door. One of our men answered it and saw two men whom he asked to come inside, but they declined to do so, and asked if I was there, and if so they wished to see me outside. I stepped out and asked them what was wanted. They said that they came to inform me that they would have to deprive us of the further use of that ditch and water. I at first tried to make light of such a proposition. They said to me that it was a matter of too serious a nature to parley over; and one of them drew a paper from his side pocket and asked me to read it. A clap of thunder out of a clear sky could not have surprised me more than this paper did, but there it was in plain language, viz: That when the claims above named were worked out, or abandoned, the water was to revert to the original owners, who were these men. The facts are simply that the men from whom we bought the property had no title except as here stated, good only until such time as those particular claims were worked out or abandoned. But to us they had claimed the first and

only right; and the men from whom we had purchased the property had disappeared and were never heard of again, not by us at least. This left my partner and me again flat broke, and an accounting had to be made between ourselves. But before speaking of personal matters, will state something about the value of the property in question. The ditch was completed by the parties heretofore mentioned as claiming the title, and no doubt rightful owners. In three months after its completion to Michlgan Bluffs, the net earnings from the sale of water amounted to twenty-five thousand dollars, and the property at that time was worth at least one hundred thousand more; fully proving our estimate of its value when we bought it, and far beyond our most sanguine expectations. An amicable settlement was soon made between my partner and myself, and to my great regret it proved that I owed my partner seven hundred dollars, representing the amount that he had put into the enterprise, more than I had. My regret was not because I owed him that comparatively small sum, but because he had hoped for so long a time to be able to send for his family, his wife and children of whom he spoke so often while associated with me in business. Of course he knew full well that I had no means



with which to pay him at that time. We then parted, he going to some other mining camp, I knew not where.

### CHAPTER III.

I now thought of my old German friend, he being one of the men with whom I so pleasantly spent my first winter after arriving in this country, and of whom mention was made in the beginning of this story. I can truthfully say that during the time I had known him he was all to me that a father could be. He was then living on a ranch near San Jose, in Santa Clara Valley. In a few days I started for this place afoot, via. Hangtown, distant from my home forty miles. I arrived there at eight o'clock in the evening of the day I started. This was, by the way, my first visit to that place since I had left it early in 1850. Before I arrived in the main part of the city, I saw by the wayside a very nice looking Inn for lodging and board. Upon inquiry I was told that I could get accommodations there, of which I was very glad as I was quite tired after my walk of forty miles. The next morning I took the stage for Sacramento, a distance of fifty miles. It is here worthy of remark to state that in those days staging was

done in scientific style, the driver never leaving his seat from the time he left Hangtown until he arrived at his destination, which in this case, was Sacramento. The stations were from six to ten miles apart; the horses always ready at each station when the stage arrived; the traces from the incoming team dropped and the others hitched on, never consuming more than one or two minutes at each station. This drive of fifty miles was made in six hours, giving passengers two hours in which to get their dinner and take steamer at 2 p. m., for San Francisco, if that was their destination, as was the case with me. I arrived in that city at 10 o'clock that night. The next morning I again took stage for San Jose where I arrived at four o'clock in the afternoon. I soon found my old friend who was much pleased to see me. I remained with my friend about a month and was royally treated by him in his cozy bachelor quarters. During the time that I was there he continually insisted upon me to stay there and take up some of the land near there, which then could be had for the taking. His argument was that all of that land would soon be valuable, which proved true in the near future; but I was not cut out for a farmer, and concluded to return to the mines. Instead of taking the

stage I took a small steamboat that was plying between San Francisco and the south to a landing called Milpitas, my starting point, about seven miles from San Jose. The little steamer was well filled with passengers that came from the city the day before on an excursion. They consisted mostly of women and children. We moved nicely on that beautiful bay until about half our distance was made, then to the horror of everyone, the crown sheet of the boiler gave way, and at once filled the boat with smoke and steam; and giving all the impression that the boat was on fire, and such a scream as came from the women and children, I never heard before, nor do I ever expect to hear again. I was on the hurricane deck at the time of the accident, I am sure, but the next thing that I remember I was on the front of the boat, over the side and had hold of the flag staff; how I got there I could never even conjecture, for I had to run down a flight of stairs immediately beside where the steam and smoke was thickest. It was soon learned, however, that all danger was over, but we laid there helpless until assistance could be had from the city, about twenty-five miles away. One of the lifeboats was manned and sent after a tug to tow us in. The tug arrived about dusk, and we were landed in the city

at midnight. It is proper here to say that San Jose at that time was but a small Spanish mission, built up entirely of adobe or sun dried brick. San Francisco was also a comparatively small town, but even then quite a mart of trade, on account of the great influx of people from all parts of the world flocking to the mines. From San Francisco I took a small steamer across the bay to the north, and up a narrow bay on to Sonoma, to visit a Mr. Spense, the man who gave me the privilege of lying on his workbench, when I first came to Hangtown. Afterwards we became good friends, and I bought most of my supplies of him. Two days after my visit with this friend I resumed my journey (afoot, of course) across an unsettled valley for about forty miles. While on this tramp I came near being run down by a herd of Texas cattle, and only made by escape by jumping into a coulee surrounded by small timber. Soon after a horseman came along and then those cattle turned tail and skedaddled in an opposite direction as fast as their hoofs could carry them. I told the man what had happened and he congratulated me on my narrow escape, as those wild cattle always would take after a footman; and on the contrary, they would as quickly run from one on horseback, for the reason that the cattle knew.

very well what would happen when a lot of Mexicans rode among them with their lariats. This was news to me, but I never again had occasion to walk over any of those valleys. The second day I arrived at Benicia at the mouth of the Sacramento, where now the Great Southern Pacific ferry crosses its trains. Here I again took steamer for Sacramento; arriving there I again met with a surprise in finding my old friend J. C. Burgoyne, of whom I have spoken before. He said to me "you are just the man I want to see. I am sent here from the mines at Georgetown by a mercantile company to fit out some freight teams, and you know more about that kind of business than I ever expect to know." Very good, I said, I am at your service, but added, have you any money? His reply was, yes, plenty of it. In about ten days we had fitted out four as good four-mule teams, wagons etc., as were ever driven to the mines. I was then ready to resume my journey. At the hotel that evening we were talking over our experience in the mines since we last met and incidentally I spoke of my misfortune while associated with Mr. Harding at Eldorado Hill, and the regret I felt in not being able to pay him what was due him on our settlement. "Well," he said, "you need not worry any more

on that account, as I happened to meet him where I was at work in the mines, after becoming slightly acquainted with him, and he telling me about your misfortune, and also speaking of how anxious he had been to send for his family, I paid him the amount you owed him. He sent for his family and expects them here soon." You paid him that money! said I. Under what obligation to me were you to make such payment for me, and to do that kind act? His reply was that he was under no obligation to me, as he knew of, more than to do a kind act for a friend when it could be done just as well as not. Adding he said that if ever I got the money I could repay him, but if not, it was a small loss anyway. My readers can more fully realize what such kindness means than I am able to describe. In this connection it might be well to say that I had not seen this man only for a few moments in passing each other, from the time we parted over two years before. It is hardly necessary to state that at the earliest time I became able that money was returned to Mr. Burgoyne, with proffered interest, but the latter was refused by him. I then again turned my face towards my home in the mountains, via Hangtown, arrived there at six in the evening; and remembering the little cottage where I lodged on my

way down, I found accommodations, intending to remain several days before continuing my journey home. Next morning I started down town to see the many changes which had taken place since the time I had left there two years previous. Soon after leaving the cottage I saw a blacksmith at work in his shop and recognized him as the man who sharpened my picks during my first winter in the mines at this place. While talking to him my landlady came to the door and beckoned me to come outside. At first I was much taken back for fear I might have said or done something that was not to her liking; but my mind was soon disabused of this thought when she said she had a favor to ask of me, and I indicating that I was at her service, she said: "I have a daughter visiting with some friends at a mining camp about six miles from here, and I have wanted her home for some time, but did not know of anyone I cared to trust to send after her." Well, this request was a stunner for me at that time, especially when thinking over what she had just said, "that she did not know of anyone she cared to trust to send after her."

However, I consented to go, but frankly told her that I had no money to hire a rig to go after her. "Oh!" said she, "I do not expect

that for we have a nice horse and buggy that you are to use." Soon after the rig was at hand and I started over that rough and muddy road; but as I knew that country well, I experienced no difficulty in finding the place. Upon arriving there I drove up to the sidewalk and motioned to a woman sitting by a window; she came out and inquired what was wanted. I asked if a certain young lady was visiting there; she replied that there was. I told her that her mother had sent me after her. She stated that she would inform the young lady, who shortly followed her and was soon ready to go. And we two young people met as perfect strangers to take a ride together. I remained at their home about two weeks before returning to my own home; and all that it is necessary to say at this time about that unexpected episode is that one year from that time that particular young lady became my wife. A few words about the family; but first of all allow me to say that the mother had never seen or heard of me before that first night that I lodged with them, a month before asking me to go for her daughter, nor did I know anything of them. So this incident seems all the more strange to me and always has; and more especially to know why that old lady thought me a suitable person to send



after her daughter. But this secret I never learned. The father of this family was at that time in Sacramento Valley preparing a home for them on a ranch he had taken. The name of the family was Dilts. They had two daughters and three sons. A few months after this the entire family moved to their new home in the valley. The remembrance of this is perhaps all the more pleasing to me for the reason that it took place within three hundred yards of the place where I had lain and suffered so much after my first arrival there from the plains.

#### CHAPTER IV.

After this I returned to my home at Eldorado Hill, where the same refrain could be heard:

“Down in the deep ravines,  
Hear the roaring sounds;  
All the miners are digging,  
Digging in the cold, damp ground.”

I went to work in that place in different localities; but with rather indifferent success. A few days later I heard of some claims for sale near by which I thought was good property. They belonged to one Judge Longley

of Michigan Bluffs, who at that time was a candidate for State Senator from our district, and in the event that he was elected, the claims would be for sale. I considered this a rather uncertain proposition, so I went and saw the judge to learn if he would entertain a proposition to sell before the election, which was only a few days off. He was rather reluctant about agreeing to that, but finally agreed that if I could pay him one thousand dollars in three days from that time that I might have them. The next thing on my part was to raise the money. I then thought of the man I had rescued from the gallows, and knew if he had that much I could get it. The next morning I started for the camp where I last heard from him some months before. The day's walk was a long one, but I arrived there a little after dark. I then began to anxiously inquire for the man I sought and soon learned that he was there, and his cabin was pointed out to me by a light in the window. And as can be easily imagined a more surprised man to see me would be hard to find. He bade me take a seat, as he was just getting his supper. I said, No, John, not yet; I came here on a very important mission and I am anxious to know one certain thing before I care to sit down. And under great apparent excitement

he asked me what it was. I replied by asking him if he had any money. He said "yes, I have some, not very much." I said how much have you? "Fifteen or sixteen hundred dollars," said he.

All right, John, proceed to get supper for I am hungry and very tired, said I. After partaking of a hearty meal such as miners only can prepare for such occasions, we talked over what had occurred since that memorable night when he followed me from his perilous position to safety. In the course of our conversation I explained to him why I was there, and in the morning he handed me his gold sack and said "here it is, take it and welcome." No, said I, take down your scales and weigh me out one thousand dollars, that is all that I want. He did so and I started on my return journey and got to Michigan Bluffs a little after eight o'clock. I at once went to the Judge's office, handed him the gold and if the amount was correct to make me out a bill of sale for the claims, which he did. If there is one thing more than another that will add to a man's rest after a hard day's journey, it is a satisfied mind, which truly convinced me that what I had done for my friend had been fully appreciated. The next morning following I returned to my home at Eldorado Hill where

the claims in question were located. My chums were much surprised to learn that I had succeeded in getting the claims, as they did not think that the Judge would sell them before the result of the election was known. The next day I hired two of them to assist me in placing some sluice boxes, which was accomplished in the forenoon. After dinner we began operations on one of my new purchases. In the evening we cleaned up and the result was something over seven hundred dollars; but not all of that particular claim turned out so well. That claim and the others which I had secured at the same time realized to me practically all that I made, net, while I was in the mines in California. Then again my prospects for the future seemed to look bright, and in addition to my mining operations I began and soon completed a nice little cottage near my mines, preparatory to my marriage, which was to be in the near future. I then went to Sacramento Valley where my intended lived, and on the 16th day of October, 1853, we were married. Soon after which we moved to our new home that I had prepared, with apparently brighter hopes for the future than at any time since my arrival in the country. A few months later my wife's people also moved to the mountains and located at Michigan Bluffs, only

one and a half miles from our home, making it much more pleasant for my wife, as all in that part of the country were strangers to her. Michigan Bluffs at that time was also the home of Leland Stanford, the afterwards world renowned railroad king and millionaire. At this time his wealth was certainly not more than a few thousand dollars. He was engaged in the grocery business and I did most of my trading with him. I voted for him on several occasions for justice of the peace. He was a man of good common sense and of sterling worth to the community in which he lived. After getting settled in our cozy little home I resumed my mining operations with the highest hopes for the future. About two months after we had begun house keeping my good old German friend, Anthony Froum, came to pay us a visit, having sold his ranch intending to return to his former home in the East, going directly three hundred miles out of his way to see us for a month; and scarcely a day passed that he did not insist that we should take pay for his keeping, which, of course, could not be thought of after the many favors he had shown me. But for all this he would leave five or ten dollars on the table, and asked my wife to accept it. Upon one occasion he had left twenty-five dollars and said "Emanuel

(meaning me) will not take money, so I will give it to you, Margaret." Finally he concluded to start for his eastern home at Detroit, Michigan, but before doing so he said to me: "Emanuel, do you need any money?" I assured him that I was in easy circumstances and did not need any. "Well," he said, "you may some other time," thereupon he counted out three hundred dollars and insisted upon me taking it. Seeing his determination to leave some money with me, I offered to give him a note or some other obligation for the money he had left, but to this he would not listen. The next day I accompanied him to Michigan Bluffs where he took the stage on his return to the East. After arriving there he engaged in business with another man; at the end of two years they failed and he was left without a dollar. He then wrote to me (which was after my return to Iowa) to know if an old man without means could get a home. My reply to him was: Yes, as long as I have a dollar, I am willing to share it with you. But his desire was to again return to California. I am not a fatalist, but here is an instance where the fates certainly seem to have played an important part, for the three hundred dollars he had left with me made it possible for him to do as he desired. The money was sent to him; he started for

California via. Panama, and on that rickety old railroad they met with an accident where three hundred persons were killed and many seriously injured, he among the others being injured, but was able to proceed upon his journey. He reached his old home near San Jose, where he took up another ranch and again prospered. The last time I heard from him was in 1860, and now fifty years later, would that I could command language to fittingly express my appreciation of having known him in my younger days.

The man whose life I had saved came to see me before I returned to the East. The thousand dollars I had gotten of him was returned by me, but he most reluctantly accepted it, saying that I was perfectly welcome to keep it. After that time I never heard of him but once, and then he was living a steady, honest honorable life.

My hopes for future happiness were soon blasted, for a little more than one year after our marriage, my wife was taken suddenly ill and in a few days died. Thus ended the life of a good young Christian woman, of noble heart, whose greatest pleasure during her life seemed to be to make happy all those by whom she was surrounded. She was buried at Michigan Bluffs, and the arrangements there-

for were presided over by Leland Stanford and his good wife, who it will be remembered lost her life in such a tragic manner at Honolulu, a few years since. Here I will relate another of the strange incidents of life: After meeting Miss Dilts at Hangtown, as described before, I saw her but once, and all our further knowledge of each other was gained by correspondence, up to the time of our marriage. After marriage she spoke of a certain letter she had written to me, which I had never answered. I told her as often as she mentioned this letter that it never was received by me; and she wondered what could have become of it. She was buried at 2 o'clock in the afternoon, and that evening I went to the express office (there being no post office there then,) to get my mail, and was handed a letter, which I knew at the sight of the handwriting; but to be sure I opened it and there it was with her name written by herself. I could not read it, so took it to her people and handed it to her sister, which equally surprised the entire family as much as it had surprised me. It proved to be the one she had so often mentioned; and to attempt to describe my feelings upon receipt of it would be far beyond my power. The mystery was where was that letter all this time, which had been written nearly two years before?



The letter and the envelope I still have in my possession.

"Green be the turf above thee,  
Friend of our better days;  
None knew thee but to love thee,  
Nor named thee but to praise;  
Tears fell when thou wert dying,  
From eyes unused to weep;  
And long where thou wert lying,  
Will tears the cold turf steep."

—Halleck.

- Soon after her death Mother wrote me that now since I was again alone in the world, I must pay her a visit, which I did a few months later; but with no intention of remaining there. Soon after my arrival at Mother's home, my wife's family also concluded to return to their former home, and wrote me that they hoped I would remain in Iowa, which was also their home, at least until their arrival there. I then wrote my father-in-law to sell my mining property I had left, which he did, and I did not again return to the Golden State to make my home.

Thirty eight years after my wife's death, I paid a visit to that State, and went to Michigan Bluffs to see if I could find the resting place of

my former wife. It is here necessary to state that the graveyard where she was buried was over a very rich deposit of mining ground, and all of those buried there were moved to a new cemetery, about a mile farther up the mountainside. After a two days' search, with the aid of a family who knew her people, I found the grave; and placed a substantial marble head and footstone, that under ordinary circumstances should mark the spot for many generations to come.

THE END

